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**House of Representatives**

May 9, 2013

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The Honorable John A. Boehner  
Speaker of the House  
U.S. House of Representatives  
H-232 The Capitol

Dear Mr. Speaker:

“Let’s be clear, Benghazi happened a long time ago.” Those words were spoken just days ago by White House press secretary Jay Carney who was seemingly exasperated by continued questions from the White House press corps related to the tragic attack that claimed the lives of four Americans, including a sitting U.S. ambassador, and injured untold others – untold because the administration won’t tell Congress how many were seriously wounded in the attack.

In a sense, Carney is correct: Eight months is a long time for the families of those victims, the American people and the Congress to be denied a clear picture of what happened on that fateful night, what might have been done to prevent it and what presently is being done to ensure that it doesn’t happen again. I remain convinced, as do 139 of our Republican colleagues – nearly two-thirds of our majority – that a bipartisan Select Committee to investigate the terrorist attack in Benghazi is the only mechanism to ensure that the complete truth comes out.

In the last few days the public has learned stunning new revelations about the Benghazi terrorist attack and the Obama Administration’s troubling response in the hours and days that followed. Much of this new information has come as brave whistleblowers have sought to right the record and, in doing so, may have jeopardized their careers. Increasingly it is becoming clear that we have only scratched the tip of the iceberg.

We don’t yet know what we don’t know about Benghazi. And we may never know if we don’t pursue what Thomas Bossert, deputy assistant to the President for Homeland Security under President George W. Bush, in the enclosed op-ed described as a, “...coordinated, definitive investigation to look jointly into the entire matter, using one methodology, relying considerably on standing committee resources and expertise, that can publish its findings and conclusions in one place so that the public and their elected leaders can decide for themselves what to do with the results.”

Chairman Issa’s hearing yesterday was a positive step forward in the effort to investigate the administration for its apparent cover up of key information about the nature of the attack and

its response. I appreciate your leadership and that of the committees to advance the investigation to this point.

However, the hearing also made clear that a thorough inquiry will require witnesses from across government – including the Defense Department, State Department, Intelligence Community, Justice Department and even the White House. Only a Select Committee would be able to bring the cross-jurisdictional expertise and subpoena authority to compel answers from these agencies.

Now is the opportune time to take the good work that has been done by the committees over the last eight months, culminating in yesterday's hearing, and bring together the best of the best from each of the five committees to focus solely on this issue through the Select Committee.

With your leadership, we have the opportunity to bring all of the committees of jurisdiction together, building on what regular order has already accomplished, but cannot sustain or bring to fruition. The committees with primary jurisdiction have a multitude of issues before them ranging from gun control to immigration reform, from the ongoing crisis in Syria to the devastating terrorist attack in Boston. Among competing priorities, Benghazi could get lost in the shuffle.

There would be no cost to create a Select Committee: the staff is already on the House payroll and they would use House facilities and resources. There need be no delay – we could vote for the Select Committee one day, and bring the necessary staff and selected members together the next. There are good people on all of these committees who would be excellent members of the Select Committee. Similarly, any one of the five committee chairman would be a strong chair of the Select Committee. It would be a seamless transition that would yield significant results in the months ahead. Under the legislation, the committee would expire after 90 days, ensuring that the full investigation was completed prior to the anniversary of the Benghazi attacks. It's worth restating that the committee would be bipartisan, thereby putting an end to misguided criticism from some that this investigation is only being done for political reasons.

As you may recall, I first wrote you on November 13 – just two months after the attacks – to ask you to support a Select Committee approach to this investigation. A few weeks later, I shared an op-ed written by former Senator Fred Thompson, who served as counsel on the Watergate Select Committee, where he argued the merits of this approach. Since that time I have twice introduced a bill to create a Select Committee, have offered it to the House Rules package and have spoken with you and met with your staff in an effort to demonstrate the need. In the interim, another six months have passed.

The Select Committee process is an important tool that was designed precisely for addressing interagency issues like the Benghazi attack. It brings together the experts from across the committees of jurisdiction, ensures a single filter for incoming information from all agencies and breaks down the siloes that obstruct investigations.

Select Committees are not a new idea; in fact they have been used repeatedly over the last 50 years for cross-jurisdiction issues, both large and small. I have enclosed a list of past Select Committees that was prepared for me by the Congressional Research Service. Surely such a Select Committee on Benghazi is merited given that the House has created Select Committees to deal with less important issues, such as parking, the "House Beauty Shop," sports and aging, as well as serious and complex issues, like government assassinations and the Iran-Contra affair.

To be clear: I have no interest in serving on a Select Committee. All I want is for the family members of the victims, the survivors and my constituents to know that the House did everything possible to uncover the truth about this attack and the administration's response, develop recommendations to thwart future assaults and implement changes to protect our brave men and women serving in difficult posts. Given the dangerous world in which we live, we can be virtually certain that this will not be an isolated incident (notably, if an attack were to occur on a U.S. facility in North Africa today, eight months after Benghazi, it appears that the American posture to respond has not improved). Such a review is good for the country—exposing systemic problems and failures. America's greatest president, George Washington, once said, "We ought not to look back, unless it is to derive useful lessons from past errors, and for the purpose of profiting by dear bought experience." To be sure, the untimely death of four Americans, and the life-changing injuries sustained by others, constitutes dear bought experience. Do we not owe them a thorough, professional, exhaustive review of past errors?

I have spoken with numerous family members of the Benghazi victims who have endorsed the Select Committee approach, including the mother and uncle of Sean Smith, the father and siblings of Tyrone Woods, as well as another family member who does not want to speak publicly at this time. I have also received letters of support from the Special Operations community, including OPSEC and Special Operations Speaks, who believe the administration's answers about the force posture to respond to Benghazi – and, quite frankly, the committees' acceptance of those responses – unacceptable. Last month, I received a letter from 700 former Special Operations members urging the creation of a Select Committee. Closer to home, I have heard from many of my own constituents, which given my proximity to Washington includes scores of FBI, CIA, State Department and military officials—they overwhelmingly have echoed this same call.

For this reason, I am once again asking for your support for the creation of a Select Committee. The number of cosponsors has doubled over the last month, and 20 new cosponsors have signed on since the release of the "interim progress report" two weeks ago—prompted in part by the new revelations that have come to light *following* the release of the report. Momentum for the Select Committee continues to build. Chairman Issa's hearing on Wednesday ought not satisfy us that the job is done—far from it. In fact, another 10 new cosponsors have signed on to H. Res. 36 since yesterday's hearing was noticed last week.

Mr. Speaker, two-thirds of our conference believes that the threshold for action on a Select Committee has been reached. The families of the victims believe the threshold has been reached. After eight months, we can't wait for more time to pass. Questions would remain unanswered, procedures unchanged and accountability unrealized. That is, until another attack

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occurs and another life is lost. And then, shame on us if we, who have been entrusted with public service, have done nothing to prevent it.

Last weekend, I had the opportunity to meet with Captain Eugene "Red" McDaniel, a POW from the Vietnam War who was held in captivity for six years. Captain McDaniel lamented the state of U.S. political leadership on national security matters and he profoundly said "I'm afraid the leadership of our nation is not deserving of the sacrifices our sons and daughters are willing to make."

The revelations at yesterday's hearing have raised serious questions about the administration's efforts to respond to the Americans under fire at the annex in Benghazi. What remains to be seen is whether the House will be complicit in that failure, or if we will pursue the truth – wherever it may take us – to ensure that we continue to deserve the sacrifices made by the men and women who serve our country.

I urge you again to bring H. Res. 36 to the floor for a vote next week. It is the only way we will ever learn the truth. Thank you for your continued leadership on this important issue.

Best wishes.

Sincerely,

Frank R. Wolf  
Member of Congress

Thank You